

**Channel Tunnel Rail Link
CTRL UK Limited
Oxford Wessex Archaeology Joint Venture**

**The worked flint from Leda Cottages, Westwell, Kent
(ARC 430 01/83+200)**

by Rebecca Devaney

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1 INTRODUCTION

A total of 105 pieces of struck flint were recovered from the watching brief at Leda Cottages (Table 1). A further 245 fragments (2770 g) of burnt unworked flint were retrieved from 35 contexts (Table 2). A small proportion of material may date from the Mesolithic or early Neolithic, however the majority of the material can be broadly dated to the late Neolithic and Bronze Age. This is based on the technological characteristics of the material. There are no surviving prehistoric features, which indicates that all the material is redeposited.

Table 1. Summary of worked flint.

	Total
Flake	48
Blade	1
Blade-like flake	2
Irregular waste	14
Chip	32
Multiplatform flake core	1
Single platform flake core	1
Opposed platform blade core	1
End and side scraper	1
End scraper	1
Retouched flake	2
Serrated flake	1
Total	105

2 PROVENANCE

The worked flint was recovered from 42 contexts, including postholes, ditches, pits and a furnace, all of which are dated to the late Iron Age or Roman periods. The flint is therefore redeposited. Most contexts produced less than ten pieces of flint, with just five contexts containing between six and ten pieces. The exception is context 8159, the fill of a ditch, which contained 12 pieces of flint.

3 RAW MATERIAL AND CONDITION

Where identifiable, the predominant raw material in the assemblage is gravel flint. This is likely to derive from local river gravels. There is also some use of chalk flint, a source of which can be found about five miles away from the site. The condition of the material varies from fresh to heavily damaged, with about 60% exhibiting slight to moderate damage. These figures are consistent with the redeposition of material. Surface alteration is minimal, with just two pieces showing light to medium cortication and five pieces showing heavy cortication. Approximately 20% of the assemblage is iron stained. A total of 43% suffer breaks and 30% show signs of burning. The latter figure is very high and may be caused by the use of furnaces in the late Iron Age to early Romano-British phase.

4 TECHNOLOGY AND DATING

Debitage dominates the assemblage at 92%. Flakes constitute just under 50% of this category, although there is also one blade and two blade-like flakes. This proportion suggests the predominance of later Neolithic and Bronze Age material (Ford 1987). The blade is likely to be an intended blade removal as it has platform edge abrasion, a soft hammer impact and the previous removal was also a blade, characteristics usually associated with the blade based industries of the Mesolithic and early Neolithic. However, the blade-like flakes do not have these characteristics and are likely to derive from the same industry as the rest of the assemblage. Where identifiable, most of the flakes have hard hammer impacts and lack platform edge abrasion, which supports the suggested Bronze Age date. It is likely that knapping took place close by, as there is a relatively high proportion of chips (33%) and irregular waste (14%).

The cores category comprises an opposed platform blade core, a single platform flake core and a multi-platform flake core. The blade core is fairly small at 53 g and is likely to be Mesolithic or early Neolithic (Illustration AH-40). The flake cores (Illustrations AH-50 and AH-74) are of medium size, weighing 88 g and 101 g. There is no evidence of platform edge abrasion and it is suggested that they belong to the late Neolithic or Bronze Age.

The assemblage includes just five tools, all of which show evidence of utilisation. The end scraper (Illustration AH-71) is made on a non-cortical flake with a plunging termination and has fairly crude, abrupt retouch to its distal end. It is slightly damaged and has medium cortication. The end and side scraper (Illustration AH-85) is made on a thin side trimming flake and has neat retouch to its distal end and sides. The serrated flake is made on a distal trimming flake with a cortical platform and has serrations along its right side. The retouched flakes have retouch on one or more edges.

5 REFITTING AND USEWEAR

The thinly distributed and redeposited nature of the flint is not conducive to successful refitting and therefore attempts to find knapping refits were fruitless. However, three groups of visually similar pieces were identified on the basis of cortex, coloration and inclusions, and it is possible that groups of such pieces may have come from the same nodule.

The whole assemblage of worked flint (105 pieces) were examined for utilisation, the aim being to identify the key groups that would benefit from more detailed analysis in the future. Assessable material was scanned using low power microscopy (x20-x40 magnification) and the presence or absence of damage from utilisation was recorded. A total of 28 pieces were unassessable and of the remaining number 31% have usewear present.

6 DISCUSSION

The majority of the flint from Leda Cottages can be dated to the later Neolithic and Bronze Age. This is based on technological characteristics of the material. There is also a very small earlier component, including an opposed platform blade core and a blade. These are likely to be Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic in date. The flint is likely to represent a background of activity at the site prior to its use in the late Iron Age and Roman periods.

Table 2. Summary of burnt unworked flint by context.

Context	Count	Weight (g)
8006	24	105
8008	7	19
8010	11	93
8012	9	34
8015	20	91
8017	3	30
8020	9	30
8022	10	20
8026	28	56
8036	2	8
8083	2	3
8099	2	26
8137	2	9
8151	3	15
8192	2	2
8313	1	6
8315	2	216
8322	3	11
8343	21	14
8422	1	46
8445	2	64
8471	12	51
8493	2	27
8495	3	18
8498	44	1201
8499	2	93
8519	7	39
8520	3	8
8527	1	2
8535	1	1
8539	1	4
8584	1	10
8597	1	2
8598	1	265
8601	2	151
Total	245	2770

7 CATALOGUE

Table 3. Catalogue of illustrated flint.

Fig.	Context	Category/description
AH-40	8450	Opposed platform blade core. Large amount of cortex remains, only one side is worked,

		gravel flint, fresh condition.
AH-50	8445	Single platform flake core. Iron stained, LNE or BA, gravel flint, slightly damaged.
AH-74	8519	Multi-platform flake core. Some cortex remaining, medium size, gravel flint, fresh condition.
AH-71	8519	End scraper. Battered, abrupt retouch to distal end, plunging termination, medium cortication, slightly damaged. Evidence of utilisation.
AH-85	8604	End and side scraper. Iron staining under cortex, made on thin side trimming flake, gravel flint, neat retouch, slight damage. Evidence of utilisation.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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